

A STUDY ON WOMEN PARTICIPATION WITH REFERENCE TO MGNREGA

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Abstract

Every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work receives at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year under the MGNREGA, which legally enshrines the "right to work" and ensures livelihood security in rural areas. At least one third of the beneficiaries must be women who have registered and requested work under the MGNREGA guidelines. The primary focus of this research was on the impact of MGNREGA on women's empowerment in the Indian state of Telangana. All qualified recipients of the MGNREGS ought to be made completely mindful of the arrangements and goals of the plan. Women's empowerment is the process of boosting women's social, economic, political, and legal power in order to guarantee them equal rights and empower them to assert their rights. have equal rights to participate in social, religious, and public activities, have equal social status in the society, have equal rights for social and economic justice, determine financial and economic choices, get equal opportunity for education, get equal employment opportunity without gender bias, and get a safe and comfortable working environment. They also have complete control of their lives, both inside and outside of their home and workplace.

Keywords: MGNREGA, Women empowerment, Employment

Introduction

By and large an individual is supposed to be engaged assuming the person secures order or command over assets, admittance to training, medical services offices that upgrades their capacity, information, expertise and efficiency and in this manner work on their societal position and increment support in different navigation and political cycles too. In general, empowerment has been defined as the capacity of an individual to exercise control over their social, political, economic, and psychological lives by: 2) making decisions and 3) feeling good about oneself, participating in the community, and feeling like you have control. To put it another way, it is a change process in which people or groups with little or no power gain the ability to choose their own lives. This would be possible if all segments of the population, particularly women, had equal access to education and healthcare services, as well as the opportunity to engage in productive work and distribution of power and resources. In the majority of developmental studies, the term "empowerment of the poor" has become a buzzword, and almost all developing nations recognize it as a social movement.

It has stated that power is at the heart of empowerment and that empowerment is only possible if two things are met. To begin, empowerment necessitates the ability to alter power. Empowerment is neither possible nor conceivable in any meaningful way if power cannot be altered but is inherent in position or individuals. Second, the idea that power can grow is central to the empowerment concept. Empowerment, according to Surekharao and Rajamanamma (1999), is a multifaceted process that should enable individuals to realize



their full identity and power over all aspects of their lives. It consists of giving them access to more information and resources, giving them more freedom to make decisions, and giving them more ways to plan for their livelihood or have more control over the things that happen to them. Indiresan (1999) portrays strengthening as a cycle, which assists individuals with overseeing their lives through bringing issues to light, making a move and working to practice more noteworthy control. The feeling of empowerment is the mental drive to achieve one's objectives. In most cases, a genuine development process is expected to produce the forces that lead to the empowerment of various segments of a nation's population and to an increase in their status, particularly for women. The strengthening of the country poor is one of the focal issues during the time spent advancement of all non-industrial nations on the planet.

However, the implementation of MGNREGA in 2006 marked a significant policy shift from a 100-day employment guarantee to the provision of rural employment work. All rural Indian households are entitled, under MGNREGA, to demand up to 100 work days at any time throughout the year. As a program supported by the Central Government, MGNREGA is carried out by the Ministry of Rural Development. The MGNREGA strategy is based on accepting that the national government is responsible for providing employment to make up for structural labor market failure, as shown by the lack of employment opportunities for rural workers on occasion. This examination of the primary idea of the work request lacks experienced by the rustic poor and the unequivocal acknowledgment of the state's liability to make up for this disappointment as a component of the state-resident reduced isn't tracked down broadly outside India, as a key guideline basic Enthusiasm programming.

The program is based on the "right to work" principle, and because it is based on rights, the administration is responsible for making workers aware of their rights and making sure they can get those rights by giving them enough work. The program includes a budget for Information Education and Communication (IEC) activities to raise awareness of entitlement to work under the scheme.



NREGA Implementation officials at different levels of administration

MGNREGA's decentralized structure allows for bottom-up planning, beginning at the village level in local governments. Program implementation is also done at this level, while planning and monitoring activities are mostly done by staff at higher levels.

In terms of employment conditions and, more specifically, wages, MGNREGA has been particularly creative. It has come up with ways to set wages fairly and keep their value by indexing them. It has also used payment methods to make things work better and make it easier for more people to get a job, compensate workers who don't get jobs or don't get paid on time, and, arguably, set a minimum wage for casual laborers in some states. MGNREGA's efficient MIS system and end-to-end digitization have increased efficiency in all of this and can be monitored in real time. Under MGNREGA, significant changes to employment terms and conditions have been made to ensure that workers' rights are protected while they work and to encourage marginalized workers to participate. This section provides an overview of innovations that are particularly relevant to SSA and concern wage, workplace facilities and supervision, employment practices, and extended employment in response to shocks.

Given the preceding context, it is possible to say that empowerment makes it easier to access information, gives people from underrepresented groups the chance to participate in the decision-making process, makes institutions accountable to the public, enables people to organize themselves, and improves their capacity to collaborate with one another. As a result, it's critical to have a brief discussion about how participation empowers individuals. An attempt has been made in this chapter to investigate the level of empowerment enjoyed by MGNREGA participants in the area under study

Sent off in 2006, the Mahatma Gandhi Public Provincial Business Assurance Act (MGNREGA) lawfully cherishes the "right to work" and guarantees job security in rustic regions by giving something like 100 days of ensured wage work in a monetary year to each

family whose grown-up individuals volunteer to accomplish untalented manual work.

Promoting women's effective participation as workers and administrators has been an important goal of MGNREGA. For instance, the MGNREGA guidelines stipulate that women who have registered for the program and requested employment must account for at least one third of the beneficiaries. Furthermore, it has the potential to increase women's participation because employment is available within a 5 km radius of the village. But how far along has MGNREGA been able to achieve this goal? This blog provides some insights into the scheme's implementation in terms of providing rural women with easy and equitable access to work.

According to the 68th round of NSSO data, there has been a decline in rural India's women's labor force participation rate (LFPR, or the proportion of the labor force to the total population) from 2004-05 to 2011-12. Female participation in rural areas decreased from nearly 25% in 2004-05 to 21% in 2009-10 and then to 17% in 2011-12. Mehtabul Azam, on the other hand, conducted a study with data from nationally representative National Sample Surveys (NSS) and concluded that MGNREGA has helped alleviate the situation. The study took advantage of the MGNREGA's phased expansion to find that MGNREGA districts have seen lower declines in labor force participation than non-MGNREGA districts. When it comes to female labor participation, this effect is found to be stronger. All states have significantly higher female employment rates under the MGNREGA than the casual wage labor market[3]. When compared to their participation in other forms of recorded work, women are significantly more active participants in the scheme.

Women's participation in MGNREGA has been rising, according to official data provided by MGNREGA. It went from 40% in 2006-07 to 53% in 2013-2014 at the national level. Be that as it may, there are wide varieties across states and across locale inside a state. Even though the law says that women must make up at least one third of the beneficiaries, the actual percentage varies, from 22% in Uttar Pradesh to 93% in Kerala in 2013-2014. Participation rates are higher in the southern states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh. However, with the exception of Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh, the pattern has been low in the northern and some eastern states.

Socio-cultural norms regarding female labor force participation, mobility and intra-household allocation of roles and responsibilities, opportunity costs in terms of wage differentials between the private sector and MGNREGA, the effectiveness of implementing institutions at the State and local government levels, and the influence of Self-Help Groups and NGOs all contribute to the interstate variations in women's participation. For instance, the fact that Kudambashree, a State government initiative for poverty eradication through the networking of women's groups, has been placed in charge of its implementation has also made a striking difference to the level of women's participation in Kerala, where MGNREGA has turned out to be almost exclusively for women. This convergence has contributed to the development of the rural woman's economic identity as a skilled laborer and farmer cultivator. In addition, it

has established a development interface through which women can negotiate with local governments and power structures, giving participatory governance a new meaning. Women's participation in the program has been encouraged by active youth groups and other social movements in Rajasthan. As a result, the general public is much more aware of the issue than they would have been if the district administration had been the only one advocating for it.

Equal pay for men and women has also been enforced under MGNREGA, resulting in improved socioeconomic conditions for rural women in India. The data from the 66th round of the NSSO show that there is a clear gender wage gap in unskilled wages (for more information, see Table 1), and this gap was much larger in other public works; 98.3 for men and 86.1 for women per day, respectively. These gender wage gaps are widespread throughout the nation, with Kerala and Tamil Nadu having the highest rates. According to the data from the NSSO, MGNREGA has reduced the traditional wage discrimination that exists in public works. As a result, women have considered MGNREGA, which mandates the payment of minimum wages, as a viable alternative. In states where the initial condition in unskilled agriculture work is more evenly distributed between men and women, this may partially explain the higher participation rates of women. Kerala, which has the highest MGNREGA participation rate and the highest gender wage gap in agricultural labor, is an interesting example. (93% of MGNREGA members are women).

Women's socioeconomic status has improved as a result of increased access to economic resources and paid work. Studies[6] show that women are more able to make decisions at home because they are more independent when it comes to collecting and spending MGNREGA wages. Women have also reported having easier access to financial institutions and credit. Women are now more financially able to contribute to society as a result of the requirement that wages be deposited into bank accounts. Women's full participation is still hindered by a number of factors, including the absence of crèches and other work-site facilities, long working hours, gender relations, and implementation difficulties. Women will likely have more time and opportunities to participate actively in MGNREGA if mobile crèche services that are safe and effective, women's flexible working hours, and gender-specific life cycle needs are provided. This would be an important step toward closing the gender gap that exists in rural India.

Women break new ground in Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme

In the current fiscal year, the percentage of female employees participating in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) reached a high not seen in ten years. The Union Ministry of Rural Development's most recent statistics show that 57.8% of workers who used the program this year were women, the highest participation rate since 2012/13.

The Hindu looked at 15 states—Kerala, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Odisha, Jharkhand, Assam, Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh—where women's participation was on the rise. The main special case is Kerala, where the drop is miniscule. In Kerala and Tamil Nadu, women have made up between 85 and 90 percent of the MGNREGA workforce over the past five years.

Two factors, according to Kerala Rural Development Minister M.B. Rajesh, are to blame for this phenomenon: Women MGNREGA workers' welfare benefits and market forces. In the state, there is a significant gap between MGNREGA wages and market wages, especially for male workers, who are paid significantly more than female workers in the open market. As a result, MGNREGA employment is much less appealing to male workers. Under MGNREGA, the state also provides incentives for women workers, such as a special welfare fund that provides insurance against work-related injuries and financial assistance for women workers over the age of 60.

Improved performances

Bihar and Uttar Pradesh saw the greatest improvement in this regard this year, and the growth spike was higher there. This year, Bihar saw a 3.7 percentage point increase in the percentage of women employed, while UP saw a 3.3 percentage point increase.

18 States have yet to receive the 4,700 crore in MGNREGS wages from the Union government. In Bihar, as of December 30, women were responsible for 56.88% of the total persondays worked under the scheme, which is a significant increase from the figures of 51.75% in 2018-19. "The state government had sent a clear message to the administration from the top that women's participation in the program would be used to evaluate officials' performance. We have been keeping track of the numbers up to the panchayat level throughout the year. Furthermore, to urge more ladies to participate, we worked intimately with the self improvement gatherings.

Employing women supervisors

However, despite the increase this year, UP is still just above the MGNREGA-mandated 33% women's participation level. Women used 37.6% of persondays this year, up from 34.28% the previous year.

The UP Commissioner of Rural Development, Gouri Shankar Priyadarshi, asserted that the State was coordinating efforts to include more women. We have fundamentally expanded sending of ladies as mates (or worksite managers) which has had a positive effect. As of right now, 32,280 Mahila Mates have been trained, and approximately 21,050 of them have been deployed at MGNREGA sites, earning a payment of 60.68 crore rupees. In fact, only seven of the 15 States that were looked at have women making up less than half of the MGNREGA workforce: Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya

Pradesh, and Maharashtra are the states.

Participation of Rural Women in MGNREGS

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (Mahatma Gandhi NREGS) is a demand-driven wage employment program that provides for the enhancement of the livelihood security of the households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work in each financial year. The women participation rate in FY 2021-22 remains at 54.54%.

"Priority shall be given to women in such a way that at least one-third of the beneficiaries shall be women who have registered and requested for work," reads Para 15 of Schedule-II of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. There will be efforts to increase disabled and single women's participation.

Gender equality is promoted through the Mahatma Gandhi NREGS program, which provides facilities for crèche, work-side sheds for children, child care services, wage parity with men, and a separate wage schedule for women. Women mates have also been introduced in conjunction with the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), facilitating women's participation once more. Additionally, the scheme aims to provide works close to beneficiaries' homes. These actions improve cooperation of ladies.

The rate of participation of women and the computed women persondays in Mahatma Gandhi NREGS during the last three financial years and current financial year 2021-22 (as on 19.03.2022) is given below:

Financial Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Women participation rate (%)	54.59	54.78	53.19	54.54
computed women person-days (in crore)	125.12	145.36	206.96	187.38

(As per MIS)

As per the Schedule I of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA, construction of check dams are permissible under Mahatma Gandhi NREGS. The details of completed and ongoing works of

check dams along with expenditure incurred under Mahatma Gandhi NREGS since inception as on 19.03.2022 is given below:

The details of completed and ongoing works of check dams constructed under Mahatma Gandhi NREGS since inception as on 19.03.2022			
Number of completed check dams	Expenditure (Rs. in crore)	Number of ongoing works of check dams	Expenditure (Rs. in crore)
11,10,862	23093.82	2,31,810	6991.84

source: <https://rural.nic.in/en/press-release/participation-rural-women-mgnregs#:~:text=Women%20participation%20rate%20in%20FY%202021%2D22%20remains%20at%2054.54%25>

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Conclusion

Nearly all of India's rural development programs were designed to give rural people more power over their finances and employment opportunities. The MGNREGA was also put into effect with the same goal of giving the rural masses more power through their active participation. By increasing their level of acquaintance with panchayat members and their participation in the election of panchayat members, the program had politically empowered the participants, particularly the female participants. Most of the time, when we talk about empowerment, we're referring primarily to women because men in Indian society had access to many benefits that women had. Here, it has been observed that women from various communities are more involved in MGNREGA activities. In addition, female participants from the SC/ST communities were found to have greater freedom of movement and decision-making power at home than female participants from other communities. From the unmistakable examination it has been seen that the presence old enough old peculiarity of orientation segregation in a portion of the networks, particularly among the overall class and Muslim people group has been an extraordinary obstruction in accomplishing the maximum capacity of the program in enabling the rustic masses.

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